

First Shots - XD 45 ACP *Continued from Page 22*

Shooting

Shooting with me were two friends who are both accomplished shooters. Joe is a Federal Agent, about 5' 8" with slightly smaller-than-average hands. Kirk is about 6' 2" with fairly large hands. He has taken several classes and shot several matches at the Firearms Academy of Seattle. Unfortunately, I was unable to borrow other high-capacity .45's from the store for comparison. We did, however, have three guns available with which to compare accuracy and perceived recoil. The first was a .45 ACP SIG 220R with Crimson Trace LG-320 laser grips and Tru-Glo TFO tritium fiber optic night sights installed. A .40 S&W Springfield XD Tactical with Trijicon sights was the second. The third was a Beretta 92FS Centurion in 9mm. This last gun has a Langdon Tactical speed bump trigger, a Wolff coil trigger return spring system, Crimson Trace LG-202 laser grips, and is finished in Robar's slick and hard NP3 coating.

Our shooting was done on a 50-foot indoor pistol range. For accuracy we used 50 feet small bore rifle targets. These targets have 11 bullseyes about the size of a silver dollar. If you can keep all of your shots in the black on this target at five to seven yards, then you can normally shoot a tight defensive-sized group out to about 50 yards. It was easy to do that with this gun. For our rapid-fire sequences we used a 4" bullseye at five yards. We shot hardball loads from Independence, PMC and Sellier & Bellot. For premium ammunition we used Speer's 200-grain Gold Dot and Winchester's 230-grain Ranger SXT. The only malfunctions we experienced were two failures of the slide to lock back on an empty mag. This was the direct result of one of the shooters using a high-thumbs grip and riding the slide release. Just so I don't embarrass him, I won't tell you that it was Kirk.

Shooting off hand, the best group was my first, a five-shot group at five yards with Independence 230-grain FMJ. The edge of this group peeks out from behind a nickel. All of the other groups that I fired for accuracy could be covered by a quarter. It was frustrating, because with every other group the gun was doing its job until I pulled a shot. I am confident that the gun could do that with any of the ammo we shot. For comparison, we were able to get a comparable-sized group out of the SIG 220R and the Beretta. We weren't so lucky with the XD-40 Tactical. At 50 feet I put a full magazine of PMC 230 grain FMJ into 3-1/8" from the bench

using a rest. At five yards off hand, it was very easy for all of us to keep controlled pairs and longer rapid-fire strings in the 4" bullseye. Kirk was enjoying the XD 45 ACP so much, I thought I might have to Taser[®] him to get it back.

Perceived recoil is very difficult to quantify. Bore axis, slide mass, spring weight, frame material, grip shape, angle and composition all contribute to the sensation we feel pounding our palms or torquing our wrists when we shoot a handgun. It helps if you can shoot different models back to back; switching guns every 10 or 15 rounds. Having acknowledged our subjectivity, allow me to pass on our perceptions of what I expect to be a very significant gun for Springfield Armory.

Joe made the first comment saying, "The recoil is very controllable."

Since he had the smallest hands of the group, I think that is significant. While being an excellent shot, he has struggled in the past with his duty gun, a Glock 22, breaking his grip between shots and slowing his shot-to-shot times. When watching Kirk shoot the XD 45 ACP, I was struck by the lack of muzzle flip. Consistently, the muzzle would only rise about 1-1/2" to 2". He also commented that the recoil is "exactly like" his XD-40 and XD-9.

There is more of it to be sure, but he felt the direction of the forces the gun places into your palm and wrist are the same as the smaller caliber siblings. Comparing the four guns, the muzzle flip of the SIG was the greatest. I could watch the laser hit the ceiling about seven yards down range with each shot. The XD 45 ACP was gentle

on the wrist, and rather gentle on the palm for a 30-ounce .45 ACP. The XD-40 Tactical and Beretta were both very soft shooting.

The XD 45 ACP is an amazingly compact high-capacity .45 ACP. The overall height and length approximates that of the Kimber Pro BP-10 II. Its grip is remarkably small in circumference and extraordinarily comfortable to hold, though longer than the XD-9. Recoil is surprisingly gentle for a 4" barreled .45 ACP weighing in at only 30 ounces. We won't have to wait for the holsters or accessories, as most of those already on the market for the other XD's will work. Practically speaking, the XD 45 ACP was more accurate than we could shoot. From where I stand – behind the gun counter – it looks like Springfield has yet another winner.

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